1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

tunity in the field would allow were collected. *Before* seeing a ceremony I interviewed, as many times as possible, the leader and principal participants. *While* the ceremony was taking place I wrote careful descriptions and interviewed bystanders, or participants if possible. *After* the event I went over the two accounts and checked for discrepancies, and again interviewed. I repeated this many times. I collected a great number of accounts of the same myth and observed the variations and conformities of the several accounts. I made a detailed and accurate observation of the natural conditions to which the society is adapted—in particular, climatic changes and the adjustment of nature to them—and obtained native ideas and evaluations of the various phases of the weather and other changes in nature.[3]

B. *Classifying the Materials*

I analyzed the native accounts of myths and determined that they fell into dramatic sections or "movements," and these again into episodes. I lettered and gave descriptive titles to the dramatic sections (three in the Wawilak myth); and I numbered consecutively and summarized descriptively each of the episodes (ten in the Wawilak).

I analyzed the ceremonies and determined that these likewise fell into dramatic sections, and the sections again into groups of episodes (cohering elements of the rituals). The sections I lettered and gave descriptive names. Each subdivision (group of episodes) of a section I numbered, summarized analytically, and described fully. At the end of each *section* I wrote in the native interpretation of that section of the ceremony with respect to the myth.

In collecting these interpretations I used a free association method and did not question directly, allowing the native informants to tell what they thought about the ritual either while it was being enacted or when they were discussing it before or after its performance. These native interpretations constituted, then, a detailed study on the first level of interpretation, based on the meanings, beliefs, and attitudes the natives held explicitly and consciously about the various parts of the myths and rituals.

I ascertained that there is a connection between the myth and ritual, first by observing that the native mind *is* aware that there is a *general* connection (even though this awareness is only rationalization).[4]

[3] The Marndiella, Ulmark, and Yiritja Narra were not observed as completely and are not as completely described as the other ceremonies.

[4] In the earlier half of my field work I was unaware of the full significance of the

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

This established, the next step was to see *what kinds* of symbolical relations exist between myth and ritual—to determine how far and in what details the various parts of the myth-symbols are thought of by the natives as being correlated with the various dramatic symbols of the rituals. If a point-for-point connection between myth and ritual could be determined, then certain wider generalizations could be made, and certain larger associations, of the phenomena of nature and society as they are related or not related by the native mind, tested.—I summarized, referring always to native interpretations, all the symbolical meanings of the several sections of each ceremony to see which were equivalent and which were not. That is, I found, say, that ritual sections A, B, C, and D of a certain ceremony, as well as X, Y, and Z, had the same theme *according to native interpretation*, while sections N, O, and P were different and had a different theme. I could now generalize on the myth-ritual symbols in terms of major, minor, and equal religious concepts.

I next examined the various sections of the myth from the point of view of native interpretation in order to expand the meaning of the myth and to acquire a fuller and more detailed understanding than the myth alone was likely to give. It had become evident by this time *what* the *kinds* of relations were between the fundamental myths and the fundamental rituals. By the integration of the ceremonies with the myths, the larger ideological configuration became evident, which presented a more fundamental and unconscious level of native thought than could be discovered by a mere analysis of myth or of ritual by itself.

C. *Final Generalizations*

I could now safely step to the third major part of my examination, to generalize if possible on the several religious concepts which had been discovered as underlying the manifest behavior of the myths and rituals. I analyzed the relations of the concepts as social logics by the

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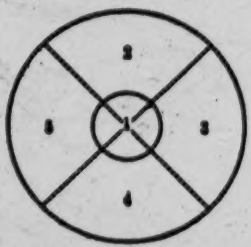
relation of the myth to its rituals, and I failed to interview consciously for the interconnections between the two. I must confess I did not see the relation between the Wawilak myth and the seasons until well near the end of my field work. Consequently most of this material was gathered without my realizing its implications. This adds, I think, to its value, since there was little chance of the field worker biasing the result of his interview, but it also means that the native interpretation cannot be presented as systematically and in as great detail as it might have been had I known the situation as well as I did when I left the field.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

use of an elaborated form of the Ogden and Richards system for the analysis of individual logic.[4]

The first myth-ritual constellation to be presented under the foregoing method of analysis is the Wawilak myth and its interlocked ceremonies. It is represented diagrammatically in the following chart:



1. The Wawilak Myth
2. The Djungguan
3. The Gunabibi
4. The Ulmark
5. The Marndielia

CHART X.—CONSTELLATION OF THE WAWILAK MYTH AND ITS RITUALS

The Wawilak myth is of extreme importance to the Murngin and is always present in their thinking. I had been in the Murngin country for only three days when I heard of it. The narrator, Yanindja, leader of the eastern Djirin clan, said, "This story belongs to the Djungguan. They [myth and ritual] are all the same thing." At the first circumcision ceremony I saw, clansmen from many parts of the country were present; and in explanation of their presence I was told by the leader, "People come to a Djungguan ceremony from everywhere because when that snake swallowed those two women he stood up right to the sky and sang out and people heard him from every place." (He meant that all the clans come to attend the ceremony.)

This most important of the myths was collected a great number of times and all the fundamental features and most of the secondary ones were always present, no matter how poor the narrator. The occasion was always just before, during, or just after the ceremonies supposed to be connected with it.

The story is primarily an account of how before the time of present-day man the two Wawilak sisters and their children marched out of the southern inland after committing clan incest, and came to the Liaalaomir totemic hole. Here the older sister profaned the pool of the Great Python by accidentally allowing her menstrual blood to fall

[4] *The Meaning of Meaning*, by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, with an appendix by Bronislaw Malinowski, has been a great help to me in working out the ideas expressed in this chapter.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

the profane (since he gives an increasing proportion of his time to ritual activities), until finally he returns to where he first originated, the totemic well.

The father's dream at a child's birth is an expression of the relation of the ordinary to the sacred, since the dream announces a soul's entering the world of the living; and the mortuary ceremony is a ritualization of the relation of the once living soul[1] and also of his mourning kin to the world of the sacred and the dead. The mourning rites symbolize the relationship of these two realms in the beliefs of the Murngin.

This chapter will first describe, without interpretation except that of the natives, the mortuary rituals and afterwards present interpretative conclusions. It might be stated that when all the field material which is given here was collected the author had no idea of where the facts led, and it was only by an analysis of the material and by relating it to the rest of the social configuration that the general ideas concerning the aboriginal mourning rites were discovered.

II. Murngin Death, Mortuary and Mourning Ceremonies and Customs

When it is believed that a man is very close to death[2] his relatives gather about him and wail; some of them, in a plaintive voice, sing the garma water cycle of songs of his moiety and clan, the leader usually beating time on his singing sticks. The dying man is supposed to listen to these songs and to follow their suggestions; if he cannot understand what is being said, it is believed that the spirit of his marikmo (father's father) or his mari will come when he hears, and talk to the soul which is about to leave the body and instruct it on what it has to do.

"We sing these songs to make that soul a good one, so he won't hurt any of us." Sometimes when a man has been speared and is still alive a song is sung over him to tell him to die in the proper manner and not allow his soul to make any difficulties for those who are alive. A man who has been badly injured in a spear fight and thinks that he is about to die likes to have this singing because it soothes his pain and removes any worry about the disposition of his soul. "That fellow who has been speared says, 'There is no time for me to live now. I am

[1] All Murngin individuals possess two souls: one (warro) which is from the totem well and important, and the other which is a trickster (mokoi).

[2] See "The Moon and the Parrot Fish," Appendix VIII, Myths, a rather amusing story which accounts for death.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi, recognized by natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life, and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

* * * *

A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International Phonetic Association,[3] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3]

2. G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.
3. A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

115 part was presented by the most capable leaders and song men
124 available for the particular territory concerned. This was the case
126 also in recording the myth, which unfortunately cannot here be presented in its phonetic rendering. All features of the myth and songs were collectively discussed, and interpretations made by the Aborigines themselves.

127 A considerable amount of thought has gone into the question of
128 presenting the available data on the Djanggawul. It has finally been decided to present as much as possible of the 'raw' material without, apart from interpretation and partial analysis, engaging in theoretical discussion, for material of this type obviously lends itself to such treatment. It is our contention that the rôle of the anthropologist in the Australian Aboriginal field should be one of recording data, and of presenting these in an accessible form, so that the maximum amount of material may be available for the consideration of students interested primarily in theory. That is not to say that we disparage that particular branch of anthropological science, but that we ourselves are more intimately concerned with Australian Aboriginal problems as such and, although taking into account the wider implication of our material, we must of necessity restrict our outlook to some extent. This, to us, is an important point, for we in Australia are acutely aware of the limitations of available anthropological data. Considering the geographical extent of the Australian continent, and the apparent diversity of Aboriginal cultural groups within it, we must admit that our knowledge of these societies is sparse. It is our duty, as we see it, to compensate in some degree for this deficiency. We do of course realize that, although our problems seem to us momentous, they diminish somewhat with distance, and when viewed in relation to the sum total of human experience throughout the world they become of much less pressing significance.

000 During the last two decades Australian Anthropology has received an impetus, principally through the personal efforts of Professors A. P. Elkin and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and the Australian National Research Council has sent on to the field a series of anthropologists: this activity, and its results, have helped to counteract in some degree the errors of the past. Nevertheless, we in Australia are aware that although much has been done, there still remains more to do.

To say 'errors of the past' is not to disparage the monumental works of Sir Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, Carl Strehlow and others. What they lacked in anthropological method they made up in energy, and in their power to stimulate interest among anthropologists and others; they inspired, for instance, Emile Durkheim

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

and Sir James Frazer, and their individual importance may not be underestimated.

It is our plan to present in one volume the substance of the Djanggawul cult; this includes the significance of the myth and ritual, the myth itself, the song cycle, and a partial analysis. A great deal rests on the cycle itself, which is essentially the core of the work; so we have deliberately chosen to give poetic renderings of the songs in English. The second volume is devoted entirely to the interlinear phonetic renderings,[1] with detailed notes attached; the reader is advised to read the English translations in conjunction with these, which of necessity include many additional references. This arrangement still leaves untreated a great deal of material relating to the Djanggawul. It is planned, therefore, to present at an early date the complete Milingimbi version of the song cycle, with analysis, for this differs in several major points from the Yirrkalla version presented here. The Yirrkalla song cycle as set out here contains 188 separate songs, and the Milingimbi cycle 264 songs.[2] There is also a mass of material relating to the rituals themselves, and to dreams. Here we are able to give only a brief sketch of the sequence of *dua nara* ritual, without treating it in detail. The dreams of various informants at Yirrkalla about

[1] In this volume native words are recorded (for publication purposes) in an anglicized version of our usual phonetic rendering, without using special symbols—whereas usually we follow the system recommended by the International Phonetic Association, with modifications and additions by Dr. A. Capell (*vide* 'Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages', *Oceania*, 1945, Vol. XVI, pp. 144-76).

There is a very real need for conformity of orthography in regard to Australian Aboriginal languages, and this can be achieved only by the use of standardized symbols. Thus *j* is generally used with its Continental value of *y*. The use of the *y* initially or within a word is too loose even in anglicized spelling, while *j* is a much more accurate rendering of the native sound.

It is hoped that future workers in Arnhem Land, or for that matter in other parts of Aboriginal Australia, will build on the orthographic foundations being laid to-day by anthropologists and linguists in Australia. It is partly on this account, the unwillingness of some field workers to conform, that Aboriginal terms and concepts are often hard to identify as between different authors. When reference is made to the work of Professor Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization*, and native words are quoted, his rendering is given alongside of ours. Recent anthropologists like T. G. H. Strehlow, *Aranda Traditions*, have also adhered to the use of the *j*.

[2] The Yirrkalla songs are on the whole longer than those from Milingimbi. The latter cycle continues the travels of the Djanggawul to Balbanara; this place is between the Blyth and Kupangu Creeks and the Liverpool River, inland from about the centre of Boucaut Bay, west of Milingimbi. A volume (entitled *Daughters of the Sun*) containing and discussing the Milingimbi version of the Djanggawul has now been prepared for publication.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

Foreword

121 Djanggawul ritual and interpretation bring a new perspective to
128 bear on this phase of their life: dreams express individual attitudes towards the cult, and often show distortion of conventional ritual behaviour. In addition, there is the women's attitude towards the Djanggawul ideology, their ritual behaviour, the songs and stories they know, and their place in the general configuration.[1] Also available is a comparatively large series of stringy bark and brown paper drawings relating to the travels of the Djanggawul.

000 In conclusion, we must consider the question of whether or not the Arnhem Land Aborigines will themselves benefit from a study of this type. It is our belief that understanding of the fundamental issues involved in a religious cult like that of the Djanggawul will (or should) persuade administrators, missionaries and teachers to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards Aboriginal indigenous life. Through it they may glimpse the complexity of its organization and the simplicity of the basic theme: they will understand too the inter-relationship of Aboriginal life with the natural environment, the natives' dependence on the resources available to them, and their faith in the divine nature of the great Ancestral Beings. Through this medium they may, perhaps, come to know and appreciate something of the Aborigines' way of life.

There has been much discussion among anthropologists regarding the mingling of basic research results with applied anthropology.[2] We believe, however, that the anthropologist who over a period has worked with a particular group of people, who has learnt their language, has come to appreciate their way of life, has become in some degree absorbed (as far as this is possible for a stranger and a European) into the society, and has become interested in and emotionally attached to them, discovers sooner or later that he feels morally obliged to aid them in some practical way. Professor Herskovits has commented on this obligation: 'It is the nature of the case that the anthropologist is best fitted to see the strains and stresses of underprivileged groups, or of natives who no longer control their own lives. He sees these stresses and strains from the less pleasant, under-side of the situations in which they live. He sees the problems of the natives as no administrator, however gifted, can possibly see them. When, then he is in a position to aid in obtaining for the natives he knows some reinstatement of the human rights they have been deprived of, he customarily welcomes the opportunity . . .'[3] This is what the

[1] This latter section will be treated later in some detail by Catherine H. Berndt.

[2] *Vide* E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Applied Anthropology', *Africa*, 1946, Vol. XVI, pp. 92–8, and Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and his Works*, 1949, New York, pp. 630–3.

[3] M. J. Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

The Djanggawul Songs

533 songs are possessed of a sacred power peculiar to the Djanggawul.[1]
182 The songs, since they 'belong' to the divine Beings, give the ritual an atmosphere of reality, in the sense of veracity, and a deep consciousness of affiliation and continuity with these Beings themselves. Sacred songs, sung on the ceremonial ground by hereditary leaders, in conjunction with ritual and dancing, and in the presence of religious symbols or emblems, vividly reflect and re-inspire the religious emotions of all who hear them.

126 The songs presented here are translations, and have inevitably
638 suffered in the process. To appreciate all the subtle turns of phrase, the abundant allusions and so on, one should read them in the
128 original, interlineally translated, in conjunction with copious notes.[2] It is only through understanding of the language that we can derive the fullest benefit from these songs.

Nevertheless, we have adhered strictly to the literal translation of all words in the songs, endeavouring to retain the beauty of the original. Difficulty has been experienced, however, in finding satisfactory English equivalents for certain words. The translation errs, perhaps, on the side of restraint, for many of the English words used (unlike those in the Aboriginal text) may appear prosaic and lacking in poetic value. The different words referring to sounds of various kinds, for instance, are not easy to transcribe: and 'noise' is a poor, although often necessary, substitute.

No attempt has been made to conform to the original rhythm and metre, since this would involve manipulating the translation at the expense of its actual content. The arrangement into lines conforms to the pauses made by the Aborigines themselves when singing or reciting.

128 Comments or notes are not attached to each song, as in the case of the originals, but any points that seem to need discussion have been referred to in the section immediately following each part of the cycle. For convenience, and to facilitate the gradual development of our analysis, we have set out ten parts to this epic, corresponding to various stages in the travels of the Djanggawul.

As the songs progress, from one stage to another, we may follow the symbolism and intent which have already been indicated in earlier chapters. The significance of each part will be treated briefly at its conclusion, so that at the end of the epic the whole may be viewed in proper perspective.

[1] In *Kunapipi* (*op. cit.*, Chapter VII) it was said that 'the songs are the echo of those first sung by the Ancestral Beings: the spirit of the echo goes on through timeless space, and when we sing, we take up the echo and make sound.' This applies also to the Djanggawul songs.

[2] These are to be published separately through the journal *Oceania* as a monograph, on account of the great number of phonetic texts. The serious reader or student is advised to read these in conjunction with the translations set out here.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

whereas the latter terminate abruptly at Arnhem Bay, the myth draws to its anticipated conclusion somewhere beyond Milingimbi. Presentation of the Milingimbi version will throw some light on this question of the myth in its relation to the songs: for, as mentioned earlier, it not only repeats much of what has been set out here, but continues on to the Balbanara district, on the mainland south-west of Milingimbi. Even so, some of the place names mentioned in the myth are omitted from the Songs, and some of the incidents said to have taken place are not correlated. For example, we are told in the myth that the Sisters' clitorises were first cut at Dambala(nguru), whereas in the Songs this is done at Marabai. The two places are, however, close together; the most important point is that in both instances the cutting occurs after the Sisters have lost their sacred basket and *rangga*. Several other details, such as the piercing of the Sisters' hands by the *gabila* mangrove 'nail' fish, are not treated in the Songs; the latter incident, however, took place when the *rangga* fish traps were being erected (Part Four), so that this seems to be a matter of omission rather than of contradiction. Other features, like the *jiritja* moiety water blocking the Djanggawul at Waruwi, the flying foxes at Maiilwi, the meeting with Buralindjingu, and the Djanggawul's sojourn on Galiwinggo Island, are contained in the Milingimbi version. In the Songs, no mention is made of the killing of Miralaidj by sorcery, and of her miraculous reappearance; possibly this was not a traditional element, and was inserted without sacred sanction.

Where actual discrepancies are found between myth and Songs, it is difficult to find a satisfactory explanation. It is perhaps reasonable to suggest, as above, that the traditional songs are less subject to apparent alteration, while the myth depends on individual telling without the operation of the same social controls, and the story-teller is not bound to adhere rigidly to the main theme. Nevertheless, the myth provides a 'setting' for the Songs, and helps us to glimpse the whole in perspective even if not in considerable detail; on the other hand, it does not reveal the symbolic significance of the cycle in the same clear fashion as the Songs.

The Songs are presented here in the way in which they are sung. The original sequence, word order, and structure are retained (except that when sung rapidly there is some slurring and abbreviation of words, not manifested in slower singing). The only thing lacking is the accompanying music; for they are, as mentioned, sung in conjunction with ritual and dancing. When the anthropologist has knowledgeable and competent informants, is acquainted with the language and with the ritual, and records the words as they are sung, the margin of possible error is considerably

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
O117 Murngin O117

minimized. Moreover, the constant repetition, which serves to impress on listeners the main features of the Songs, has a similar effect upon the singers themselves. An important device where transmission is entirely oral, with no visual aids except the sacred objects employed in the rituals, it also helps to ensure that the essential outline of the Songs is handed on from one generation to another. With the myth, however, it is rather a different matter. The myth is never narrated consecutively as a story, and there is no accompanying check of song and ritual. It is told in fragments, so to speak, to explain certain physiographical features, elements of social behaviour, or ritual activities; or brief extracts from it may be cited in the course of relevant discussion. The myth as related in this volume is composite, and represents a synthesis of several versions.

In some points, the myth as told by women does not conform to that told by men. Essentially, however, all the versions are in agreement. Women, too, stress the long penis of the Brother and clitorises of the Sisters; the stealing of the basket and *ranggu*, and leadership of the *nara* rituals; the association with the sun and with the *lindaridj* parakeet; and the sacredness of menstrual and after-birth blood. They are inclined to emphasize the powers of the Two Sisters at the expense of the Brother, and to credit them with creating and leaving the most important animal and vegetable foods for the benefit of the Aborigines who were to follow them. The important childbearing rôle of the Djanggawul Sisters, setting the pattern which women follow to-day, is said to have been introduced by themselves. Before this, among the spirit people inhabiting the land, women would select babies from the many to be found sitting among the foliage of the cycad palms, and take them back to camp to be breast-fed by the men. Women, it is said (with a certain amount of rationalization), were too busy with sacred ritual to attend to the bearing and rearing of children. The Djanggawul, however, started the practice of child-bearing as it is now known, and were the True Mothers of the Aboriginal race in this region.

Let us turn now to a review of the Song Cycle as it is presented here.

In Part One the Djanggawul leave Bralgu, the island of Spirits, to which they had come from somewhere farther across the sea. The Songs emphasize the fact that this was the place from which they voyaged to the Australian mainland. The Morning Star, too, was sent from Bralgu, and from there rose the sun, the influence of which is felt throughout the cycle: for, as mentioned in Chapters 1 to 3, the Djanggawul Sisters

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

APPENDIX IX

MAHKAROLLA AND MURNGIN SOCIETY

121 This section, too fragmentarily and too briefly, tells the story of Mahkarolla, a Murngin who was my friend. Although we had not seen each other for almost twenty years, we continued being intimate and close friends until his recent death. He was a member of a "stone age tribe" and I have lived most of my life in modern industrial America, yet during his life our friendship was as strong and enduring as any I have experienced with my own people. I think I knew him as well as I have ever known anyone. Most of this chapter will be in his own words; the part told by me relates incidents in our relationship which I believe reveal his mature wisdom, moral strength, and his fine qualities as a human being. Throughout the book I have striven for objective reporting and detached scientific analysis; although Mahkarolla's autobiographical sections in this chapter do conform to these criteria and the evidence was collected accordingly, I hope the last section about him will express what I felt him to be as a splendid human being, as well as express my love, respect, and admiration for him. Perhaps in any true account of a lasting friendship this is the ultimate objectivity.

The previous chapters present the Murngin world as a social system and as a symbolic order, while "Social Change in North Australia" (Appendix I) attempts to reconstruct something of the past of Murngin life, particularly the relations of the Murngins with the Macassar people. The purpose of this chapter is different: it is designed to let the reader meet a Murngin individual and *feel* what he is like as a human being. This chapter can render no claim to being an autobiography or a personality analysis. Rather it is an incomplete account of a man's life and his feelings about himself and his world assembled from field notes which were collected to understand not Mahkarolla but his society.

128 Throughout the text of this chapter the social references and social significance of his remarks have been indicated by placing page references to the text of the book in parentheses. For example, when he speaks of his experiences in the circumcision ceremony the pages in parentheses refer to age grading parts of the Djungguan ceremony and other appropriate social and collective behavior. Mahkarolla tells part of what he *thinks* he

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

remembers of how it felt and what it meant to him as an individual; the text referred to presents the norms and modes of the society.

When I arrived in the Murngin country the men who had been on board the sailing vessel with me very quickly spread the news of my arrival among all the people. A number of the older men came to see me. Among them was a man who, I discovered, could speak a fair amount of English. He and I talked. I learned his country was on the mainland farther to the east; although he spoke English his thinking was native; and he considered himself, and was looked upon, as a person of consequence and authority among his people.

Across his chest and on his upper arms were ritual scars from self-inflicted wounds which had been filled with ashes. I judged him to be a man of about 45, possibly a bit older. He told me that his name was Mahkarolla. It was not long until we began our discussions, he telling me about his people and I telling him about mine. He became my best informant. We went out hunting together. We did together many of the things common to the daily life of a Murngin. He took me on my first canoe expedition away from Millingimbi Island to some of the other islands in the Crocodile group where a great ceremony was being held in honor of Bapa Indi, the python totem. It was during this first expedition that we became aware of our mutual dependence and friendship. Thereafter we were constantly together.

The next sections are told by him. I have translated his English, much of it pidgin, and his use of Murngin into standard English and have arranged what he told me in a simple chronology.

"When I Was a Little Boy"

I don't remember myself when I was very little. When I was a little larger I wanted to go to the countries of other clans and see places like Elcho Island and the Goyder River (map, page 40) and see how people lived and what they did and learn their language, but I was too little. All this was before I was circumcised.

I had heard my older brothers and some of the old men talk about Kopang and Macassar and the black men who lived to the west and who talked a language we little children could not understand (pages 453-458). I, too, wanted to go there and see those countries and ride on Macassar prahus which came to see us when the wind was from the East, but I was too little. Some of my brothers and some of the old men had been to those countries and a few of these men, while they were there, had Macassar women for wives. Charli Charli Sit-Down, my older brother, fell to the deck from the mast of a Macassar ship. He broke his back and still lived.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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region can note. It is for this reason that Mr Chaseling's book will be read by others besides the general reader.

In the rest of this Introduction, I draw attention to a few of the significant facts in the life of the north-east Arnhem Aborigines, and also to some of the important points made by Mr Chaseling.

Aboriginal Relationship System and Intelligence

North-east Arnhem Land is a very interesting region from the anthropological point of view. As elsewhere in Australia, the basis of social behaviour is the kinship or relationship system. According to this everyone is related to everyone else. This relationship, however, is not expressed in a multiplicity of terms which express the exact relationship between any two individuals. Instead, only about two dozen terms are used, with the result that all one's relations, that is, everyone in the region, are divided up into twenty odd groups or classes of relations. Thus, in one class the Aboriginal includes his own mother and her sisters and also a number of other women, mostly her cousins, and to all these people he applies one term, the term which includes and means 'mother'; the term 'sister' includes not only the daughters of his father's brothers and of his mother's sisters (these are sometimes referred to by students as parallel cousins), but also the daughters of certain of his parents' cousins; and so on with the other terms. This is the classificatory (or classifying) form of kinship system. It does not mean that an Aboriginal does not know his own mother, or father, or son, or father's father, and so on; he does know them—indeed, he is very good at genealogies. Its importance is that the terms used by two people of one another indicate the kind of behaviour they adopt toward each other—whether, for example, they can sit near one another, speak to one another, see or marry one another, and what is the obligation with regard to gifts and mourning with